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ABSTRACT

This report presents papers on the vocational qualifications systems in Sweden, France, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, and England and Wales. An introduction (Russ Russell) looks at common themes. The paper on Sweden (Gun Cardell) addresses vocational education opportunities, curriculum and standards, costs, youth and employment, and proposed reforms. Topics in the paper on France (Alain Herbert) include vocational education opportunities, apprenticeship and cooperation, full-time vocational education, adult training, educational leave, and modularization. The paper on the Netherlands (Leo Blokzijl, Ton Knobbout) discusses vocational educaation opportunities, apprenticeship, middle-level vocational education (MBO) which requires 4 years of full-time study, and apprenticeship and short MBO which requires 2 years of vocational education. The paper on the Federal Republic of Germany (Wilfrid Reisse) looks at the complex legal base, further vocational education, curriculum design for apprenticeships, operation of the apprenticeship system, full-time vocational education, further vocational training, adult training, and modularization. Discussion in the paper on England and Wales (Russ Russell) focuses on the organizational and legal basis, the Industrial Training Boards, the Manpower Services Commission, full-time college-based vocational education, adult education and training, and a new qualification system. A summary and overview (Russ Russell) briefly compares the five countries and also makes comparisons with the United States and Japan. (YLB)

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Vocational Qualifications in Five Countries

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COOMBE LODGE REPORT
Volume 19 Number 5

VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES

By Russ Russell, Gun Cardell, Alain Herbert, Leo Blokzijl, Ton Knobbout and Wilfrid Reisse

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VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS IN FIVE COUNTRIES

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This brief study originated in a seminar sponsored by the Department of Education and Science and the Manpower Services Commission. A brief comparison of five countries was required as part of the agenda papers for the working party reviewing the structure of vocational qualifications in England and Wales.

The contributors to the seminar have re-written their papers for this report. They are presented here with a new introduction and summary.

This study would not have been possible without the original seminar and the contributors from the five countries express their appreciation for the opportunity to meet and develop this work.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the support and contributions given in the seminar by Len Bill, Head of Curriculum Development at the City and Guilds of London Institute, and Dr George Tolley, Chief Officer of the Review of Vocational Qualifications group.

We are grateful too to all those contributors and commentators who, acting as independent consultants and experts — not as official representatives, gave freely of their own time.

Russ Russell
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INTRODUCTION: COMMON THEMES

Russ Russell

DEFINITIONS, MEANINGS AND 'SOCIAL PARTNERS'

Each country faces its own history and its own hopes for the future. Structures, definitions and ideas are therefore unique to each country despite the fact that a general commentator or observer may see some common pattern. Part of any general pattern derives from a continuity of exchange of ideas between countries, but those running the systems do not usually make such comparisons and certainly do not use the same concepts or ideas.

The generalisation of concepts between countries arises from those who compare. As an example, let us take the word 'vocational'. It could have a meaning, when applied to qualifications, which refers either to a narrow group of jobs, or an industry, or a series of technical disciplines. It could refer to a span of tested knowledge, a span of tested skills, or it could be a 'license to practise'. The meaning that such a phrase has to individuals colours the answers given to questions posed to them. In this study all of the interpretations given above are considered and used in various places but the reader needs to consider carefully which of the meanings lies behind the structure described.

A COMMON THEME: SOCIAL PARTNERS

All of the countries considered here recognise that it is one of the tasks of national government, as a partner in society, to co-ordinate the efforts of

other 'social partners' in providing a sound vocational education and training system which will achieve individual opportunity in a skilled, flexible and adaptable workforce. What varies is the definition of 'social partners' and the relative importance ascribed to them. These partners may include:

- national government,
- local government and voluntary organisations,
- professional educators,
- employers,
- trade unions,
- the trainees themselves, or their parents.

They may represent interests at the national level, at area or regional level, or at the level of the individual training enterprise. The national governments of all countries in Western Europe structure and formalise in some way the process of interaction. It goes, almost without saying, that representatives of each social partner may express an opinion that they have insufficient weight or that others have too much — but it is the claim of national governments that it is their task to decide the relative veracity of such claims. Governments not only monitor the effectiveness of relative influences and re-structure accordingly, but consider the levels of financial co-operation and the general output of the education and training systems. In the creation of structures and policy the definition of effectiveness is that which the national government adopts.

A COMMON THEME: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In the countries reported on here the vocational education system is generally seen as not including higher education or the universities. The formal system of vocational education is primarily geared to provide an initial training taking place at, or very shortly after, the end of compulsory schooling. This training is the basis of the provision of a skilled workforce. Many vocational education systems provide for a systematic structure of

career enhancement or upgrading possibilities. Both initial and career enhancement systems are discussed in this report. As will become clear, England and Wales remain unique in the degree to which the national government has stood clear of the development of these two systems, allowing them to develop according to a co-operation between the other social partners not directly initiated or sponsored by the state. This has applied both at a statutory level and (until very recently) at a financial level as well.

In the other four countries there have been major government legislation and finance both to recognise, develop and modernise the apprenticeship system and to enhance and develop alternatives to it. As a result the other four countries have vocational education and training systems which not only cover all the main occupational areas, but in total cover between 70 and 95 per cent of those entering the labour force without higher education. There are, within each system, considerable variations from the main system and structures described here but the variations are from what is seen as the normal or dominant route for the majority populations (e.g. 16-19 year olds). Variations exist because of detailed industry-specific or local negotiations, or the recognition of the need to cater for ease of access for minority populations. In the context of a main system dominated by youth, adults needing training may be seen as a 'minority' population.

A COMMON THEME: VARIATIONS IN RESPONSIBILITIES

National government administrators responsible for overseeing vocational qualification systems face a series of issues which form or relate to some of the criteria by which they judge the effectiveness of the system. Five key issues are the degree to which the systems are relevant, credible, cost effective, accessible and comprehensible to the general public. The key operational questions which have to be asked in looking at these issues structure this study. Each paper attempts to answer the following questions, but not necessarily in a fixed sequence.

- What organisations establish vocational curricula, examinations and certificates?
- Is this backed by or established by legislation?
- What are the voluntary and legal bases for co-operation of the social partners in the system?

- How comprehensive is the main system of initial qualification?
- How does the initial system relate to career enhancement?
- Who actually awards certificates?
- Who examines knowledge, skill and competence? How do the social partners relate in this activity? How are the standards of the qualifications guaranteed?
- How does the system allow the individuals to progress, to enhance their careers, change careers, start careers late?
- How transferable are qualifications?
- Who pays for initial and subsequent training? Who organises and undertakes the training?
- Who pays for the standard setting and competence guaranteeing system?

SWEDEN

Gun Cardell
Assistant Secretary, Upper Secondary School Division
National Board, Sweden

The Swedish educational system is a national and unitary system which has, in effect, three main levels of decision taking relevant to the comparisons made in this study. The structure is mapped in Figure 1. What is of interest in this study is that the social partners are involved in decisions on education at all levels. Although the national government has to define goals, issue regulations, set its budget and formulate its policy, it does not implement this policy but presents it to the National Board of Education (NBE). Various social partners are represented on this board. This pattern also exists at county and municipal levels. There is a separate National Board for Universities. The NBE has a large secretariat and takes on responsibilities that in many other countries would be those of the Ministry. The finances of the NBE come from the Ministry.

Sweden has adopted a 'rolling reform' in education, i.e. the educational system is revised continually by the following procedure. The Ministry of Education proposes a Bill to Parliament outlining major principles concerning school organisation and general aims. The ensuing Act is implemented by the second highest school authority, the National Board of Education, which provides every school in the country with information on modifications and innovations decided on by Parliament, supplemented by more detailed guidelines and recommendations worked out by the NBE. This information is contained in a handbook — *läroplan* — stating the overall aims of education as well as the aims and objectives of all subjects being taught, outlining the syllabus and giving the guidelines for each subject, and discussing teaching methods and materials. There is one such curriculum for the compulsory school, one for the upper secondary school and one for municipal adult education.

It should be noted that although guiding principles for the teaching of different subjects are laid down, it is clearly stated that within the general framework it is ultimately up to the teacher to develop the type of approach that best suits his or her personality.

One rolling reform has been to create a new integrated upper secondary school during the period 1962-1972 by progressively merging previous forms of full time educational provision for 16-19 year olds after compulsory schooling.

The principle underlying the structure of the school system is that all children and young people — irrespective of social or geographical position — are to have the same opportunity to develop their personalities and acquire knowledge and skills as far as their individual aptitudes and abilities will allow. (See Figure 2.)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

The vocational education provided for young persons up to the age of 18 forms part of the integrated system of upper secondary schooling which includes both theoretical and vocational study programmes. Upper secondary school is divided into 25 'lines' of two, three or four years' duration. There are 20 two-year 'lines', most of which are vocationally oriented, four three-year 'lines' of a more academic character, and one four-year science-technology 'line' which may be terminated after three years. There are also more than 500 specialised courses for vocational training; these are discussed below.

One of the aims of the reform was to elevate the status of vocational education in the eyes of parents and students. This has been achieved. The proportion of students opting for vocational studies has been steadily increasing. Youth unemployment has given the vocational lines still more wind to their sails. Many students now choose as their first preference a line of studies which gives them the opportunity of going straight from upper secondary school to employment.

Over 90 per cent of the age group leaving compulsory school enter full time courses within the upper secondary school. The bulk of these (265,600, i.e. 85 per cent) are in a 'line' course and the bulk (about 76 per cent) of these in a vocational line. There are, in addition to the 25 'lines', about 500

specialised vocational courses which vary in length from a few weeks to one year (total student numbers: 45,000). These courses are not all run every year in each school but are mounted according to demand. They are of a more specialised nature than the lines, which are fairly broad. The specialised courses deal with skills not suitable for sustained training, or of a specialised character, or those in small demand. The vocational lines are quite broad, covering a range of jobs or trades (although some specialisation takes place in the options within them) and effectively cover the whole span of employment possibilities.

Entry to the work force is dominated by the full time off-the-job vocational education and training received in the integrated upper secondary school. Thus the system of vocational qualifications used in Sweden is primarily geared to upper secondary school and to the syllabi and credential systems used there. Upper secondary schooling is organised in the same way everywhere in Sweden, i.e. with uniform goals, syllabi and credential systems. The range of educational opportunities can however vary, depending, for example, on the size of the individual municipality.

CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS

It is ultimately the Ministry which sets the administrative regulations which contain the outline of the vocational curriculum (or any curriculum). The NEB has the responsibility to recommend these — and the NEB is, in effect, the drafting and formulating organisation. The NEB has itself pursued a policy of using specialists but making sure that there are commissions or committees of the social partners at national level to validate and approve the curriculum, content, and standards implicit in that curriculum. At local level there are 'little local commissions' to receive, interpret and occasionally detail the curriculum for locally varying needs. The local commissions are chaired by an Inspector of Education and include teachers and other social partners. The commissions also have broader responsibilities for vocational orientation and work experience in the lower secondary school. (Local authorities at this level may set up separate commissions for these tasks.)

Within the testing system it is the teacher who defines the operation of standards by setting and grading test materials. Sweden has no final examinations in upper secondary school. The teacher guarantees the standard with individual assessment of the pupils. The teacher must have at least seven years' job experience of the trade.

Students are given marks indicating study results in any given subject at the end of a term or academic year. A five-point scale is used, the figure 5 denoting the best achievement. Each mark is the expression of the teacher's over-all assessment based on careful consideration of all relevant aspects. The individual teacher is solely responsible for the marking. No educational or legal authority can alter a given mark or force a teacher to do so. Inspectors do however provide a system of informal standardisation, year to year, through comment and in-service activities.

NBE has constructed diagnostic material for use in the vocational lines of upper secondary schools. In the vocational lines of upper secondary school the diagnostic materials are used as an aid to the teacher in evaluating his/her own teaching and as a means of indicating a standard of acceptable competence in the main subject of each line. There are at present 15 different sets of diagnostic material for these lines.

COSTS

The costs of this system fall on the state. The National Board of Education (NBE) submits annual budget requests to the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. A Budget Bill is introduced in the Riksdag in January preceding the fiscal year concerned. The Riksdag decides how resources are to be allocated. Most of the funds which the Riksdag votes the NBE for the school system are distributed between municipalities throughout the country according to special regulations issued by the Government. National Government spending in 1982/83 totalled SEU 277.8 bn. This figure included SEU 33.1 bn. for education and research. The NBE's share of educational spending amounts to SEU 22.1 bn, of this 16.2 bn goes on school buildings, costs and teachers' salaries.

Municipal expenditure in the school sector roughly equals national spending, i.e. about SEU 20,000 m. A relatively large proportion of municipal taxation revenue goes to schools. Expenditures covered by municipal revenue in this sector include the following:

- local education authority personnel;
- school management district administration;
- school health services;

- school transport;
- school meals;
- audio-visual aids centre;
- teaching materials for pupils in compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and adult education;
- pupil welfare staff;
- SYO (educational and vocational orientation) and SSA activities.

An average place in upper secondary school costs about 27.000 SEU per student (of which the state pays half and the municipality half). A place in the vocational lines is more expensive because of the equipment required. Students don't pay anything except for some textbooks. They get a study grant of 400 SEU per month, irrespective of parental income.

It should perhaps be added that the National Board also controls the number of people entering each line both nationally and locally. It relates output to the labour market and does not give a *carte blanche* for the student's individual preference to determine the direction of expenditure.

The vocational lines offer many opportunities for placement on the job. Where these exist there is payment to the host company. There is also a residual apprenticeship system offering some 5,000 places a year. Apprentices have individual contracts. The apprenticeship agreement has to be approved by the local education authority in order for the employer to be entitled to a state grant. It is also the duty of the local education authority to maintain continuous supervision of these activities; this is usually done through the municipal upper secondary school.

Vocational education is to some extent partly or completely hosted by a company, which is then remunerated by the state. The company provides both equipment and instructors and the instruction has to comply with the curriculum for the corresponding upper secondary school studies. It is the duty of local school authorities to make sure that this is done. Some teachers say that in-house training of this kind lacks breadth and may be excessively preoccupied with the needs of the individual company concerned, and that

students undergoing this type of training do not receive the same amount of instruction in general subjects as students taking the vocational lines of upper secondary school. Despite these objections the proportion of in-house vocational education will probably increase.

As stated earlier, most of the vocational training is given in the upper secondary school. Only a small proportion (seven per cent) is given in workplaces in other schemes. For the vocational education (seven per cent) hosted by a workplace, the state will pay 206 m crowns during the fiscal year 1985/86:

— workplace training (on-the-job training in industry)	SEU	86 m
— workplace training (commerce, trade)	SEU	53 m
— apprenticeship training	SEU	67 m
	SEU	206 m

It should perhaps be said (rather than assumed) that, in common with most systems in Europe, the cost of curriculum setting, standard maintaining and examining are 'wrapped' into the general education budget processes and not clearly or distinctly identified.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

There are in addition two other types of education in Sweden which to some extent run parallel to upper secondary school, namely adult education and labour market education. These two forms of education are intended only for persons aged over 18, but as part of the campaign against youth employment they have been opened up to 16-18 year olds. The policy changes and developments in these areas of education and training derive from state consultative mechanisms in addition to the National Education Board.

In 1970 the Swedish Employers Confederation and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation formed a committee called *Arbetsmarknadens Yrkesråd* (the vocational committee for the labour market) to work for a common policy concerning vocational training. There is also a committee concerning the Education for Salaried Employees in Industry (*Kådet for tjánstemannautbilding inum industrin*), in which the Swedish Employers Confederation and the Swedish Central Organisation of Salaried

Employees collaborate. These committees make recommendations on different issues concerning vocational training. These recommendations are given to the school authorities, and the SSA committee (joint consultative body for schools and the employment sector at local/regional/central level) and to the vocational committees for the upper secondary school.

Even the trade organisations have committees for vocational training. The social partners influence vocational education through the Board of Education where they are represented.

YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT

Since 1976 municipal authorities have had responsibility to follow up young persons who, for one reason or another, decide against going on to upper secondary school or are unable to find work. It is the duty of the local education authority to follow the progress of these young persons until they reach the age of 18 and to offer them arrangements which will help them to enter upper secondary school or employment. Once young persons reach the age of 18+, the main responsibility for their employment devolves on the employment service and they are, for example, offered positions in youth teams.

Today, in the mid-1980s, the follow-up scheme and upper secondary schooling can be said to have developed into an institutionalised route for young persons into the labour market. There is growing insistence on the Government's part on follow-up measures being more closely integrated with upper secondary schooling. Upper secondary schooling and the follow-up scheme are regarded as reciprocating units. It is assumed that an expansion of upper secondary schooling will reduce the need for follow-up measures, but this will depend on the ability of upper secondary schools to retain the new student categories which they will be admitting. For upper secondary school admissions in the 1985/86 school year, priority was given to 16 and 17 year olds. This has been a disadvantage to youngsters needing more time to decide whether or not to go ahead with upper secondary schooling. The Government, however, has promised during its current term of office to introduce a youth guarantee whereby all young persons under 20 wishing to enter upper secondary school will be enabled to do so.

REFORMS PROPOSED: WORK EXPERIENCE

Arising in part from the principle of 'rolling reform' there are two changes of particular interest: firstly, the place of work experience; secondly, modularisation.

In 1976 the Government appointed a commission to make a thorough review of the upper secondary system. The commission's terms of reference were supplemented by directives from two subsequent Governments (1977 and 1979). In December 1981 the commission presented its final report, 'A reform of the upper secondary school system'. The commission has also issued certain other publications, such as a special report, research reports and contributions to the debate.

In June 1984 the Riksdag passed a Government Bill, entitled 'Upper Secondary Schooling in Transition', defining the following objectives:

- upper secondary schooling available to all young persons;
- greater organisational and structural flexibility, so as to cater to labour market requirements and individual preferences;
- a development of the internal work of schools, so as to give teachers and pupils a better opportunity of adapting instruction to different needs, as well as facilitating the delegation of decision-making responsibilities and a democratic work organisation;
- wider co-operation between education and the employment sector, and the integration of theory and practice;
- collaboration between upper secondary schooling and adult education so as to develop recurrent education opportunities while at the same time showing respect and consideration for the education needs of different categories.

A successive renewal of upper secondary school is intended and a five-year research and development period was inaugurated in the 1984/85 school year. To begin with work will focus on the following four experimental fields:

— the organisation of studies;

— the internal working environment;

— work experience for upper secondary school students;

— collaboration between upper secondary schools and adult education.

During this five-year experimental period the plan is for foundations to be developed for a revision of the curriculum.

In the autumn of 1984 the Government appointed a reviewing committee (OGY) which includes representatives of the social partners to consider the future content and organisation of vocational study programmes. Among other things this committee is to investigate means whereby schools can keep abreast of technical progress and respond to the demands of the employment sector and at the same time give students a good basic command of general subjects. The committee submitted its final recommendations to the Government early in 1986. A Government Bill is expected in the autumn of 1986; any changes will take effect in 1987 or subsequently.

The possibility is being discussed of organising vocational studies in such a way that students will spend their first two years at school and will spend between 10 and 20 per cent of their time at workplaces. This is to be followed by a third, 'finishing' year, most of which will be spent in the employment sector. This third year will also include a more intensive study of general subjects during periods spent in school. The intention is for courses to be organised on a modular basis, as is already practised with labour market training and municipal adult education. This is one of the main principles used in all the work of OGY. In this way students will be able to choose, up to a point, which subjects they are to study and when. This does not imply, however, that they will be offered a *smörgåsbord*. They will have to follow predetermined study programmes, but with certain opportunities for variety and election. In this way, too, it will be possible to organise modified study programmes for students with difficulties. A team of approximately 60 experienced teachers is being given one year to prepare these plans.

An important point in the reviewing group's remit has been to outline a

possible reapportionment of responsibilities between national and local government and private enterprise where vocational education is concerned. The result may be a system whereby schools are responsible for goals, emphasis, syllabi, in-service training, the training of instructors (from workplaces), supervision and direction. Workplaces will be responsible for providing work experience opportunities and instruction.

The reviewing committee recommends permanent groups of school and workplace representatives for syllabus development. Vocational teachers will have to meet new requirements. For example, they will have to accompany their students in the employment sector for four weeks every school year, and another four weeks will be needed for in-service training. The necessary expenditure cannot be accommodated within existing appropriations, and it has yet to be decided who will provide that additional funding and who will bear the cost of providing work experience opportunities.

REFORMS PROPOSED: MODULARISATION

Modularisation is seen as an important possibility in reforming the vocational lines. The pressure for it derives not from the main system which remains healthy, but from the problem of integrating the adult and unemployed programme to the dominance of the 'line'-awards. If the 'emergency' or special programmes are not to be seen as second rate, they must conform. The 'lines' themselves are sufficiently broadly based to satisfy employers and the labour market in general for flexibility; the problems of the speed of change are noted above. The 'follow-up' activities referred to above are relevant in this context of reform.

These follow-up activities have been aimed at enabling young persons to enter regular education or employment. In relation to existing goals and resources it is fair to say that the follow-up scheme is working well. For many youngsters the personal support and involvement derived from the follow-up scheme is essential if they are to cope with subsequent education and employment. Surveys have shown that more than 30 per cent of the young persons involved in the follow-up scheme go on to further education and just over 30 per cent enter employment. About 20 per cent proceed to other measures of labour market policy after age 18. Some of the young persons taking part in the follow-up scheme, then, are motivated or can be motivated for education. One problem today, however, is that young

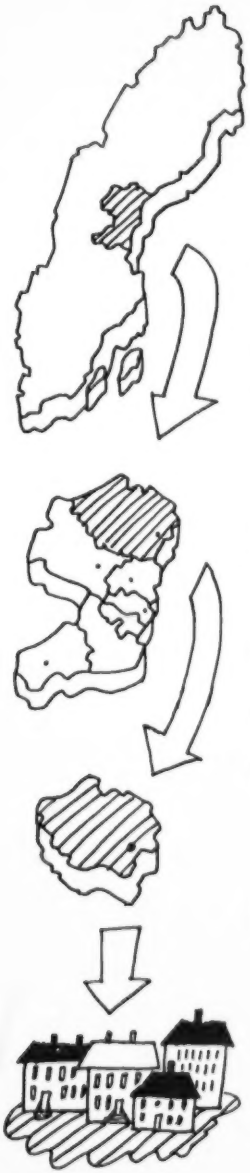
persons cannot be credited, for credential purposes, with the various activities included in the follow-up scheme, except as work experience.

The National Board of Education has, therefore, proposed that a number of municipalities be authorised, starting in the 1986/87 fiscal year, to co-ordinate educational activities under the follow-up scheme with upper secondary schooling and other forms of instruction. The intention is to provide more extensive and improved instruction, mainly of a vocational character, and in this way to enhance the prospects of the participating youngsters proceeding to regular education and/or to improve their employment prospects.

The experimental activities will be very limited in scope to begin with, but the young persons involved in follow-up activities do not constitute a homogeneous group. Apart from those who are motivated or can be motivated for education, there are also youngsters who have completed their vocational education (equal numbers of young persons are now being recruited from compulsory and upper secondary schools respectively) but are prevented by the current employment situation from obtaining regular work. Another group of young persons comprises those with negative experiences of compulsory schooling, whose initial qualifications and motivation for further education are frequently deficient and who would prefer to be gainfully employed. Parallel to the experimental scheme, therefore, the measures already existing (such as follow-up programmes and youth opportunities with educational activities included) will have to be retained.

The idea is for a modular system of studies to be created as part of the experimental scheme so that young persons completing one module after another will eventually attain the equivalent of an upper secondary school leaving certificate. These studies will alternate with work experience/employment and will proceed slowly. Education will be geared to the upper secondary school and municipal adult education curricula, which will be divided into modules for the purpose. At least conceptually the NEB has had teams seeking to modularise the engineering and metal work curriculum to allow for this. What progress there is is seen as provisional or of a pilot character. A number of problems still remain, however, before the experimental activities can be inaugurated. These include defining the exact credential value of instruction under the follow-up scheme in the case of young persons attending, say, grade 1 or 2 of upper secondary school. It will be for the experimental scheme, which is expected to last for three years, to indicate various ways of resolving this problem.

FIGURE 1: Levels of decision-taking in the Swedish educational system



The Riksdag and Government (Ministry of Education)
define goals and guidelines, issue regulations and ordinances and give instructions to the national authorities.

The National Board of Education (NBE)
is the central authority responsible for compulsory schools, upper secondary schools and (below post-secondary level) adult education. (Higher education is the responsiblity of the National Board of Universities and Colleges.) The NBE has the task of ensuring that the goals and guidelines defined by the Riksdag and Government are put into effect and, if necessary, revised.

24 County Education Committees
Each county has a County Education Committee which supervises schools in the county, distributes state grants, supports and encourages school development work etc. Together the NBE and the County Education Committees have the task of ensuring the development and improvement of schools.

Municipal Education Committees and Local Education Authorities
Schools and adult education are predominantly a municipal responsibility and one of the biggest items on the municipal budget. The Municipal Education Committee is the municipal body which decides school policy. Those decisions are put into effect by the Local Education Authority and its officials.

Schools
Each school is directed by a head teacher, but planning involves consultations with staff and pupils and — in the case of compulsory schools — with parents as well.

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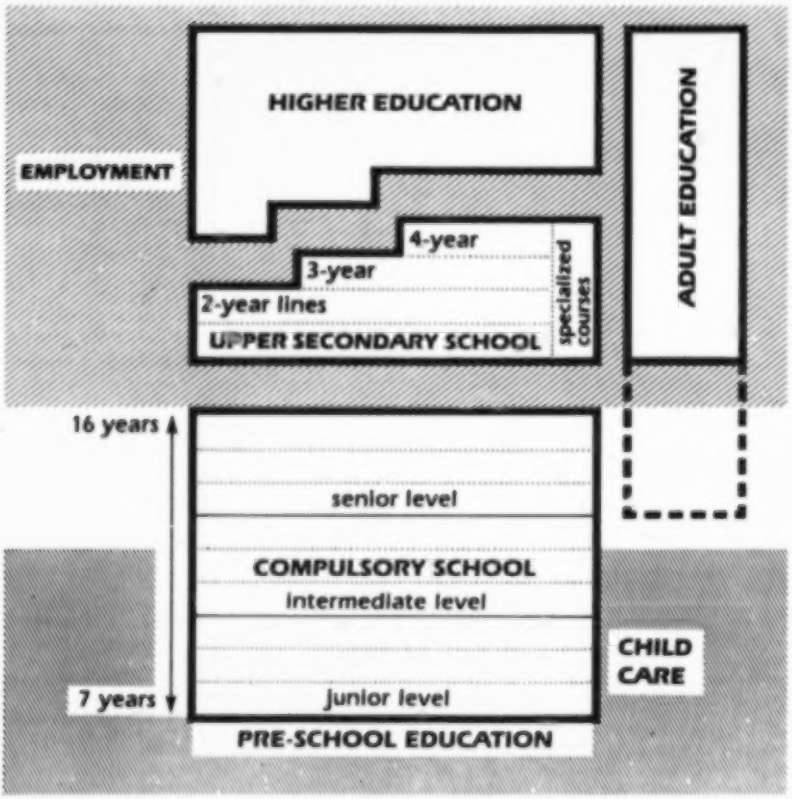
FIGURE 2: The structure of the school system in Sweden



FRANCE

Alain Herbert
Inspector of the Academy, Paris Region
and
Russ Russell

The French vocational education system has a national character and has worked for decades within rigid statutory frameworks based on qualifications and routes to them recognised in nationally defined examinations and institutions. (See Figures.) Despite that statement one should recognise that for many years there has been a progressive regionalisation of administration and decisions concerning the scale of provision and budget administration. There also exists a policy of 'permanent consultation' with the social partners in all matters concerned with the labour market and vocational training, a policy which, in conjunction with regionalisation, makes for very flexible provision of vocational education.

Examination certificates in France are always issued on the authority of the National Education Minister, even when students are trained outside the state system of training (private schools exist in a few industrial fields, or independent Catholic schools).

VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

On completion of compulsory schooling in France a young person has a choice of routes. Despite the attempts by the government and administration to raise the status of vocational education (and of full time vocational education) these routes exist in a fairly clear order.

- **Apprenticeship** is a contract with an individual employer, a pattern of on-the-job and off-the-job training leading to a national examination and award of the *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) (three years);

- **Full Time Study** in a *Lycée d'Enseignement Professionnel* (LEP) leading to the award of a *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) (three years);

- **Full Time Study** in a *Lycée d'Enseignement Professionnel* (LEP) leading to the award of a *Brevet d'Etudes Professionnelle* (BEP) (two years);

- **Full Time Study** in a *Lycée d'Enseignement Technologique* (LET) leading to the award of a *Baccalaureat de Technicien* (BT) (two-years) — this leads to employment or further and higher education;

- **Full Time Study** in a *Lycée d'Enseignement Général* (LEG) leading to the award of a *Baccalaureat Général* (two-years) leading to higher education.

APPRENTICESHIP AND CO-OPERATION

Apprenticeship is popular with young people, their parents and employers in producing both opportunities and a skilled workforce. The BEP (see above) was developed some 15 years ago on a more general syllabus than the trades specific apprenticeship and CAP is less popular. Nevertheless the apprenticeship system is supported by a tax or pay-roll levy on all employers which is used to fund a variety of costs, including the wages of apprentices. Approximately one-third of all young people enter the labour market through this route which covers most trades and areas of employment with over 200 recognised, defined trades.

The responsibility for defining and issuing regulations rests solely with the Minister of Education. However at the national level, organised by the National Minister of Education, permanent discussions are going on in a series of CPCs (*Commission Professionnelle Consultative*) to define:

- profile of new or evolving jobs,

— new contents of training and vocational studies.

CPC corresponds to a large field of an industrial activity (for example 'chemistry', 'metal work' . . .). They are constituted with representatives of management, trade union workers, civil servants, ministerial officers. When a new training field has been explored (profile, contents, exam, numbers needed in industry, etc . . .) all regulations, which have been prepared largely by officials or civil servants expert in the area, are put as the subject of consultation to a National Council called *Conseil de l'Enseignement General et Technique* (CEGT). After the decision (even if it is against!) the Minister of Education publishes new regulations in the *Official Gazettes Journal Officiel de la Republique Francaise* (JO) and *Bulletin Officiel de l'Education Nationale* (BOEN).

Industrial managers are also participating at the local level, in examination commissions, when students are going through their examination (examination is free of charge for the students; fees and charges are paid by governmental funds).

The examination commissions exist at a regional level and are convened by the level of administration known in France as the Rectoret. A commission is chaired by an Inspector; decisions and awards are the responsibility of the Ministry but the intention is for joint decisions rather than formal consultation. For the smaller trades more than one region may combine in an examination commission.

'Permanent Consultation' is the characterising phrase for apprenticeship since effectively the state has taken, through the apprenticeship tax/pay-roll levy and other taxes levied for vocational educational purposes, responsibility for maintaining the system. The state is however committed to consultation and co-operation at national, regional and local levels. The current structures derive primarily from a national agreement between the social partners. This agreement was put into effect by the National Education Act of 1971.

OTHER FORMS OF CO-OPERATION

The training of apprentices is carried out partly in apprentice training centres (CFA) which are funded by apprenticeship taxes. These are organised under the Ministry of Education. Further co-operation exists

with various patterns of consultation in the grouped establishments (GRETA) which are formed as mechanisms for acquiring co-operation between *Lycées* in planning decisions and delivery of vocational education to young people.

Finally each *Lycée* (including the LEP and LT) has a council to advise on its administration (*Conseil d'Administrativ*) on which sit industrial managers, trade union representatives and local political nominees.

FULL TIME VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

For the purposes of this paper there is little need to describe the details of variation of the two main full time qualification routes (BEP & BT). Suffice it to say that they exist within the principles of national design with industrial consultation together with regional/area examinations with commissions including industrial representatives. Because of different emphases on skill/vocational — education/general education there are slight variations in procedure. For funding purposes it should be remembered that the whole cost of the full time routes are met by the state from normal taxation. Only apprenticeship is funded by the apprenticeship tax.

An over-all impression of the system can be gained from the following award figures for 1982:

CAP (predominately apprenticeship)	264,669
BEP (full time, general)	100,184
Baccalaureat de technicien	70,184
Baccalaureat general	172,347

Thus it can be seen that the BEP qualifications are not highly successful. Created 15 years ago, they were intended to replace CAP, with a larger scale of qualifications, corresponding to a large family of jobs. They are not highly prized by industrial staff because they are considered not sufficiently vocational or specific.

The new *Baccalaureat Technicien*, with specialisation in 11 routes and the

possibility of access to higher education, the higher technician awards, or directly to work, are very popular. The general baccalaureat is also available in a variety of disciplines and keeps open a variety of routes.

TECHNICIAN AND HIGHER TECHNICIAN AWARDS

The older *Brevet Technicien* at a comparable level to the *Baccalaureat Technicien* attracts only a few thousand candidates now (1982: 6,031). However, the full time study route (18-19/2O-21 year olds) for the *Brevets de Technicien Supérieur* (BTS) provides a route very popular with both students and employers. Industrial managers are fond of these technicians and claim they need more of them (although it should be noted that they do not pay directly for their training). It is easy for a student with the BTS to obtain a job. Some 21,530 awards were made in 1982.

ADULT TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL LEAVE, SPECIAL MEASURES

A large and complex system of corporate and joint decision-taking bodies exists to provide for and administer the systems relevant to these topics. It would not be useful to describe the systems here except to record that within many schemes there is a rich variety of councils and committees at national, regional and local levels which determine the structures. The social partners are represented on all of these. Many of these were set up after the 1982 law relating to industrial training which guarantees each local community a budget from the state for its disposal. The budget is funded largely by a vocational training tax on the pay-roll, a tax which is in addition to the apprenticeship tax.

In general, the systems use either the same qualifications as are available and described earlier, or tend to stand outside that system of industrial training. There is relatively little formalisation of any second-stage or post-initial training, compared to many other European countries.

MODULARISATION: CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

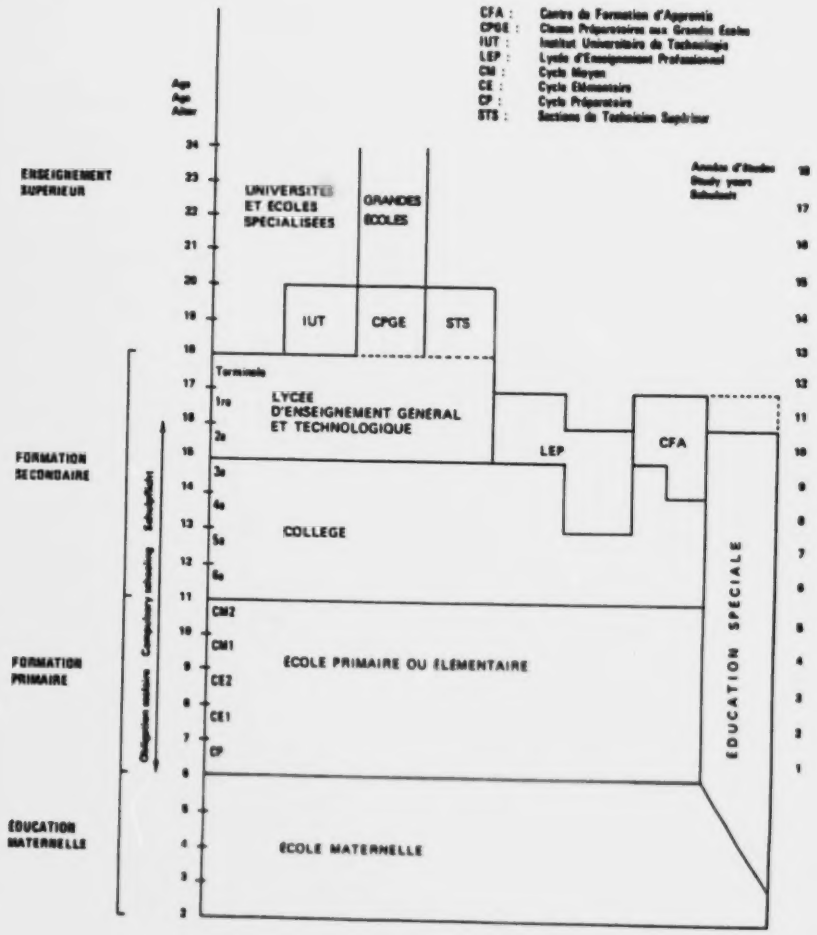
Transferability is encouraged by attempts to modularise the preparation of legally-based examinations. It was begun by CAP about 12 years ago as an

experiment which has opened many CAP routes. It works mainly for those pupils who did not get the complete examination at the end of their primary vocational training; they can come back to prepare the exam one, two or many years later in the part they lack. This system can be adapted to encourage transferability.

For the past two or three years experiments have begun for some *baccalauréats de techniciens*, and this year, for some 'BTS'. This kind of modularisation is named, in France, *unitéd de valeurs* (UV) or *unités capitalisables*.

Another experiment is to substitute continuous assessment for the examination which is passed at the end of each school year, but most teachers prefer the examination because continuous assessment needs a great deal of co-ordination. As a result, continuous assessment is not very widespread.

FIGURE 3: Outline structure of the French education system



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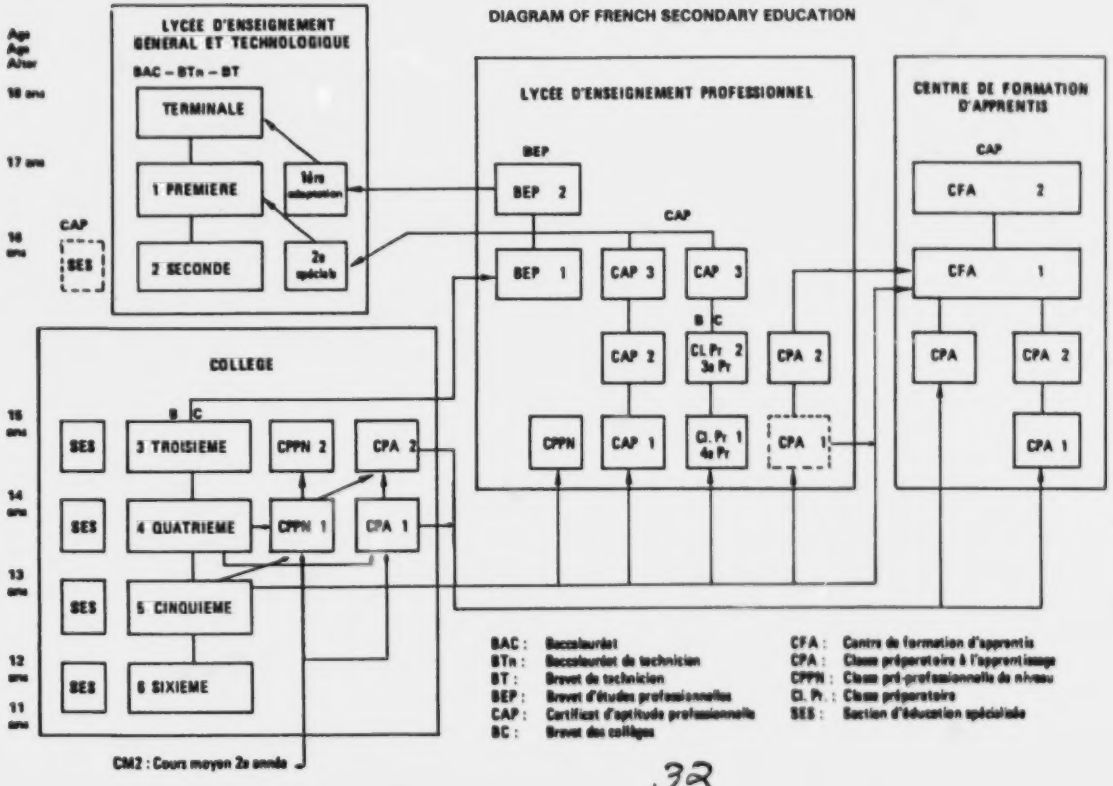

FIGURE 4: Diagram of French secondary education

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THE NETHERLANDS

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The Netherlands has a national educational system which is unitary in character in that it is nationally funded and based on institutions and examinations issued by the Ministry of Education from its powers based on national law. As far as vocational education is concerned most of the legal basis for the current structures derives from the 1968 Training Act. Of the countries reported on here the Netherlands system is unique in two dimensions:

- Secondary schools are organised by Catholic organisations, Protestant organisations, and as 'General' schools through local authorities. This is reflected in two distinct sets of networks of organisation: an employers' or providers' set, and a teachers' union set. All sets have to be consulted.
- First (or compulsory) secondary education is organised into four hierarchical levels, the lowest of which is characterised as 'vocational' (LBO). (See Figure 5.)

Despite these organisational and attitudinal complexities the system remains a national system, although as a result there is the need for somewhat heroic co-ordination mechanisms. Such co-ordinating mechanisms include all the social partners, if with a little more emphasis on the teachers' organisations than elsewhere.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

As with the other countries reported on in this paper the opportunities available to a young person leaving compulsory school at the minimum age encompass the bulk of the population. There are, however, only two main routes:

- **Apprenticeship** (BBO) which is an individual contract with national regulations. These are usually divided into a primary or first-stage for two years, with for many trade areas a two-year advanced or second-stage apprenticeship to follow on.

- **Middle-Level Vocational Education** (MBO) a full time, primarily off-the-job, education and training lasting four years. Bursaries are available to fund students but they are means-tested on parental income.

There are two alternative higher levels of general education which continue after the minimum age, but starting at 12. These lead primarily to full time higher education. These are a fairly traditional grammar school type (VWO) and a modified grammar school type (HAVO). Because of the streaming taking place at 12 there is not much transfer into them at 15 or 16 from the two lower types. These three routes, VWO, HAVO and MBO, each carry on past 16, taking in about 30-35 per cent of the age group. The BBO takes in about 10 per cent.

APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is the oldest form of vocational education but has been considerably developed in the decade 1975-85, after a decline in the decade 1965-75. The earlier decline was caused, in part, by a decline in apprenticeship available in manufacturing, and the rise caused, in part, by a rise in apprenticeship available in the service sector. There are more than 350 defined trades and apprenticeships. In many craft areas there are two levels or stages of apprenticeship and technician apprenticeship as well. The content of the training regulations is published by the Minister of Education via the usual Official Gazettes after a process of consultation.

Central to the consultation are the 31 National Training Bodies, established with the permission of and largely funded by the Ministry of Education and

each covering an industrial sector. Virtually all employment is covered by such a National Training Body and these Training Bodies themselves include representatives of employers and trade unions. The bodies are funded by central Government to administer some aspects of apprenticeship, to promote it and advise on its contents. Although very important they do not all have large secretariats. They may, having a legally distinct entity, advise or promote further training beyond apprenticeship but on funds acquired from industry or self-supporting activity. Although now operating within the framework of the 1968 Act, their tradition of independent action derives in part from their origins as independent foundations pre-dating existing legislation.

The revision of the training regulations is conducted under the initiative and administration of the two main partners in the apprenticeship system: the appropriate national training body and the 'Central Foundation for Organised Schools in Vocational Education in the Apprenticeship System' (GSB). In this process advice is taken from the Inspectorate and the social partners. Before deciding to proceed, a range of initial information has to be gathered — such as the span of industries or industrial bodies involved, who is to be consulted, the quantitative needs of industry, the relationship of trade to over-all trading patterns, geographical needs etc. After this the actual revision is administered by the National Training Body and the GSB. When all have approved it, it is offered to the Ministry and finally published. The GSB has a fairly small secretariat and relies on the National Training Bodies and very much on the educational (college) representatives, as well as on the Inspectorate to verify the contents.

All programmes for apprenticeship system are 'total': that is, they cover both the on-the-job part and the off-the-job part. Day-release is always an integral part of training. (Part time study is compulsory for all up to 16.) The examination regulations are always part of the issued regulations in total and, although there are variations, the examination is basically a system of practical tests and national written papers organised via the National Training Bodies. Most regulations contain conditions under which non-total awards (i.e. either educational or practical) can be made. All costs of curriculum-setting, standard-setting and awarding processes are thus, in effect, met by the Ministry of Education as part of its normal budget provision.

Apprenticeship has been supported and developed by legal structures and by active promotion through the National Training Bodies and by financial

support to employers by general taxes raised on the general national budget. The subsidies are worth around £500 or more per annum per apprentice and come through the Labour Ministry.

Apprenticeship can be started up to the age of 27, but after this parallel training (not yet legally an apprenticeship) may be undertaken. The apprenticeship system is thus fairly healthy and growing slightly in numbers and span, albeit with a policy of state support.

MIDDLE-LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (MBO)

Many young people (or their parents for them) prefer to stay on in full time study for a Middle-Level Vocational Education Award (MBO). These study courses are long by the standards of European equivalents. They take four years of full time study (which includes 200 days of work placement — 'stages'). There are 26 separate routes, or lines, which between them cover the bulk of the employment fields. Drop-out, or non-completion, can be as high as 40 per cent in this system.

Examination regulations and syllabuses for vocational education are overseen by an additional national body: the Association of Middle-Level Vocational Schools (VMTS), the membership of which is set and costs met by the Ministry of Education. (See Figure 6.) There is consultation with the social partners in the over-all design of these programmes, but this consultation is not enshrined in law as it is with apprenticeship. The 26 separate routes are, in fact, in six 'clusters' with slightly different administrative procedures for establishing curricula and regulations. The examinations are set at the level of the individual teaching institution with the Inspectorate acting as a system of standardisation. For testing in or approving the placement stages the school is responsible, although teachers will consider reports from employers in making their awards. The Inspectorate helps with the standardisation of levels of difficulty between centres.

There are no tuition or examination fees of any significance for MBO, which therefore has its entire costs met by central government sources — except for parental support.

APPRENTICESHIP AND KMBO

Both apprenticeship and MBO are fairly inflexible, non-transferable systems of study and qualifications. This has been of little concern to employers, parents or apprentices because of good placement levels into work. Inflexibility has become a concern with MBO with its high drop-out rate. Considerable resources and time may lead to little recognition in the labour market unless the whole course is completed. New, more modular experiments have accordingly been initiated (short middle-level vocational education — KMBO). KMBO is intended ultimately to be available on both full time and part time bases with full recognition and availability.

The full time experiments are for a two-year vocational education off-the-job with work placements or stages. It is a hybrid and seen as a series of pilot projects. Experiments have been proceeding since 1977/78 in 17 routes or lines covering most employment fields. For each project there is an appointed Select Commission of Teachers and a representative of a National Training Body. This commission designs the curriculum, using working parties. The intention is to create modular courses by analysing, among other things, existing MBO programmes and apprenticeship programmes. Thus something of the status and content of the MBO is kept and, at the end of the KMBO, there is the possibility of moving into either apprenticeship or proceeding to a full MBO. Credit-worthiness is thus to be kept, with more emphasis on certification of actual achievements in modules although this credit-worthiness does not yet have full legal backing.

Vocational placements, or stages, are an integral part of the KMBO, although more flexibility is given to them. They appear as a 'thinner-sandwich' than in the full length MBO. Some fees are paid to some employers within this system.

A form of part time KMBO has been developed in which the vocational examinations are simply those of the Apprenticeship Examination System. This form can, however, be school-based. This is state-funded and can be followed without having a training contract with a specific employer.

OTHER AND HIGHER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In common with many other countries in Europe the Netherlands offers a

rich variety of programmes for adults and for the unemployed. Most of these lead directly to either the usual certificates or structures of the dominant or normal systems or are short-term interventions for which there is no cut and dried plan as to timing or length. Many of the latter are sponsored by either the Ministry of Social Affairs or the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Most in-company training is for management development and there is little information available about technological up-dating except the work of the National Training Bodies (see above).

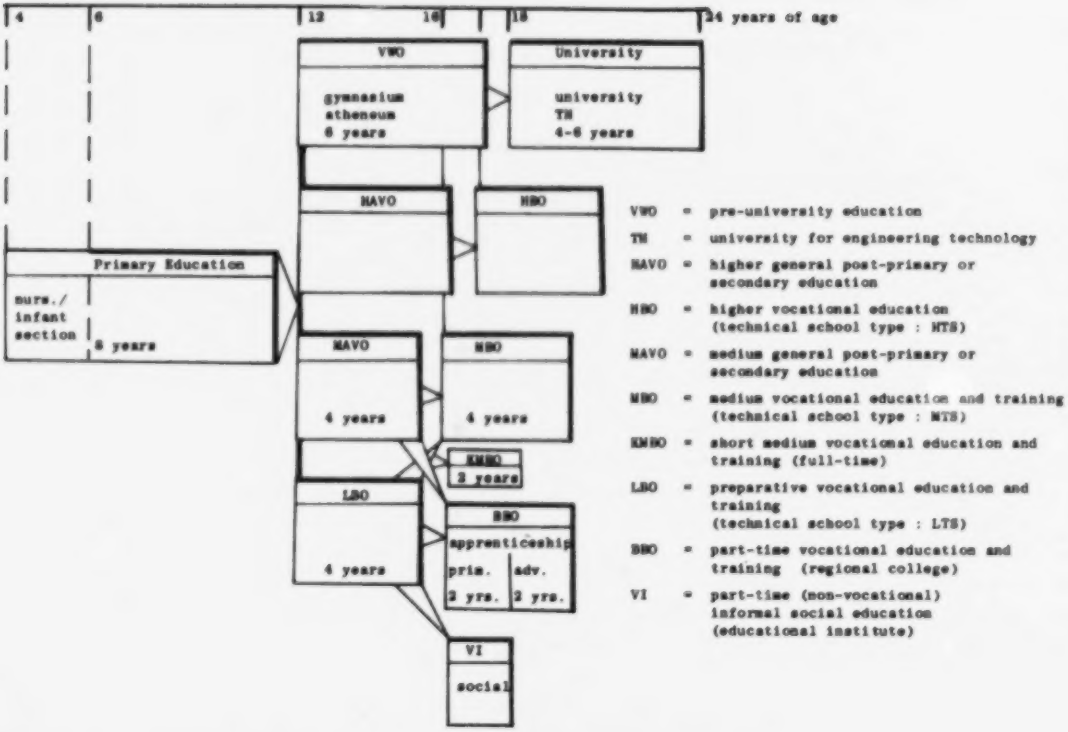

FIGURE 5: The education system of the Netherlands

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FIGURE 6: The procedure of national vocational curriculum development in the Netherlands

Type of education	Apprenticeship / Part-time KMBO	Full-time KMBO	MBO, example Technical training
proposal and establishment of curriculum committee	— GSB + National Training Body — Minister	selection commission WOP (1) added to with representatives from experiment projects	Association of Mid-level Technical Schools (VMTS)
representation in curriculum committee	— GSB — trade and industry — National Training Body	— experiment projects — National Training Body	— VMTS — industries and organisations of industrial circles
sanctioning of curriculum	— National Training Body — GSB (internal consultation procedure)	— Foundation for Curriculum Development (SLO) (external consultation procedure resulting in a model-curriculum)	— VMTS
establishment of curriculum	— Minister (after consulting inspection, Ministry of Social Affairs and/or Economic Affairs)	— Minister: establishes, based on model-curriculum, the national curriculum	— Minister, after advice from Inspectorate

(1) WOP — Workgroup Guidance Experiment Projects, consisting of:
(Werkgroep ondersteuming Proefprojecten)
— General, Christian and Catholic Pedagogical Centres
— (NI.) COBO, PCBB, VMTS
— (NI.) LOVWJ/LOCV
— (NI.) SLO (eng.) FCD

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

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The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is renowned throughout the world for its large, successful system of apprenticeship training (known in FRG as the 'Dual System'). Each year, currently, just under [redacted] 700,000 young people enter into a training contract of this sort, a figure equivalent to just under 70 per cent of those reaching the end of compulsory schooling. This is achieved because of the high level of employer, parental and young peoples' support for this system; a system achieved without specific subsidy to industry by central government.

Two things are less well known:

— the extraordinary complexity of the legal basis of the system;

— the system of further vocational training beyond apprenticeship.

THE COMPLEX LEGAL BASE

The Basic Law of the Federal Republic reserves rights and decisions in vocational training to the federal authorities and in particular to the Minister of Economic Affairs. The Vocational Training Acts of 1969 and 1981 require that, in designing the regulations governing apprenticeship, the

Minister shall consult (in effect delegate to) the Federal Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB). This institute is funded by central Government but governed by a four-part council of employers, trade unionists and representatives of central Government and the *Länder* (the 11 states of the Federal Republic). These vocational training laws enforce the principle of exclusivity (namely that apprenticeship can only be within such regulations). The Acts also give the responsibility for registering, overseeing and finally examining the apprenticeship to the appropriate local authorities — primarily the 111 local Chambers of Industry, Commerce or Craft.

Day release for vocational education or study is also compulsory but the responsibility for this rests, under the Basic Law, exclusively with the 11 *Länder*.These 11 prefer voluntarily to co-ordinate their opinions and curricular thinking through the Standing Conference of Educational Ministers of the *Länder* (KMK). Nevertheless the need for co-ordination results in co-ordination mechanisms even more heroic than those used in the Netherlands. These will be described later.

FURTHER VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Beyond apprentice training there are a number of distinct and well established routes for further training:

- Master-Craftsman training: 130 'protected' trades can only be practised by properly qualified Master Craftsmen. Many wishing simply to be supervisors or foremen take these qualifications.

- 'Technician' or 'Administrator' second-level educational qualifications are organised within the *Länder* educational regulations.

- Qualifications alternative to the two above routes are organised within the Chambers of Industry and Commerce.

- The minimum qualification of 'Trainer' must be acquired by anyone who supervises any of the 1.8 million apprentices.

The net result of the development of these routes is progressively to close

promotional possibilities to those without them: but they can (with only a very few exceptions) be acquired only after successfully completing an apprenticeship. Wise parents urge their children to enter the world of work through an apprenticeship.

CURRICULUM DESIGN FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

Resolutions and agreements on procedures for harmonising curriculum development were made in 1972 and 1974. Since then most of the large trades have had their regulations revised. There are in excess of 431 defined apprentice trades although the 'big 25' account for about 65 per cent of all apprenticeships. These cover all fields of activity, including all clerical and service industries. Currently, for example, bank clerk ranks sixth in numbers recruited, and doctor's receptionist is 14th. Apprenticeships can be one, two, three or three and a half years, according to the specific regulations; the average is about three.

In the design stages the BIBB will use its own experts and convene committees which include employers and trade union representatives, as well as representatives of the *Länder*. Fortunately the KMK has agreed that educational interests are represented by only a few *Länder* which they choose, rotating the work to appropriate *Länder*. The regulations that emerge are enforced by the Chambers. As a result of the co-ordination process, in addition to the national regulations which the Chambers enforce, there also emerges an outline learning plan (or syllabus) for the *Länder* to operate in their vocational schools. Considerably more detailing is done by the individual curriculum development agencies or processes of each *Länd*.

The costs of the above are absorbed by normal Federal or *Länder* Government processes.

OPERATION OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

Apprentices are individually recruited by employers; individual contracts are made and registered with the appropriate authorities (usually the Chambers). No state funds or subsidies are awarded to employers. The Chambers are important organisations in German business. All businesses must register with a local Chamber which is a multi-purpose public-law

organisation to register businesses, promote business interests, promote fair trading and supervise apprenticeships. Apprenticeship supervision may absorb the time of only four or five professional staff. Apart from professional advisory staff the Chamber will establish local examination committees for each trade. These include employers, trade unionists and (non-voting) vocational college teachers. The main costs of the examination processes are paid by the employers. The costs of supervision are absorbed by the Chamber and met from its ordinary levies on all its members.

All apprentices must receive day or block release from their employers to attend vocational college according to Federal Laws governing apprenticeship. (This supplements the *Länder* law which makes day release compulsory for all young employees under 18, whether apprentices or not.) The 'Dual System' thus derives its name from the pattern of on-and off-the-job training — dual co-operation of employer and state authorities.

For some trades, notably in construction and agriculture, local employers sometimes organise, often through their Chambers, a systematic first-year off-the-job training in a Group Training Centre. The running costs of these centres are met by local employer funds but their establishment has been encouraged by capital grants from the Federal Labour Office (BFA) which is described below.

The national regulations always include written and practical tests, and often oral tests as well. Standardisation of quality takes place through the fact that most chambers (but not all, nor for all trades) buy standard written or objective papers from semi-commercial examination organisations set up by other Chambers (e.g. PAL, Stuttgart, for Technical Subjects; ZPA, Cologne, for Business Subjects; AKA, Nurnberg, for Catering). Standardisation procedures for examinations, while mentioned in law, are not used frequently. Local Chamber awards are nationally recognised and valid.

The off-the-job college-based part of the training in apprenticeships, for the purposes of trade qualifications, is also examined through the Chambers. Within the day-release part of the training apprentices may take, in addition, examinations or assessment in the *Länder* (regional-state) system which are the foundation for certification of the vocational schools. Such examinations are college based with moderation by the 11 *Länder* within their own regulations. This work is usually carried out by the *Länder* Inspectorate. Costs are largely absorbed into the *Länd* budget.

Apprenticeship has a normal minimal time which can be reduced or expanded by agreement between apprentice and employer, if the Chamber agrees. The allowances paid to trainees are the result of national trade-specific negotiations between employers' organisations and trade unions as part of their normal negotiations. They vary considerably but are on average lower as percentages of skilled wages than in the UK or, indeed, most European countries. Anyone, at any age, can legally enroll for an apprenticeship if he or she can find an employer. At least half of the apprentices are currently over 18, although in most parts of the FRG young people may leave school at 15. Finally, if any worker with suitable experience wishes to take the examination for recognition as a skilled worker, he or she can do so simply by registering the request with the chamber.

FULL TIME VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: 16-19

Some young people, on leaving compulsory school, enter a full time school-based vocationally oriented education. There are 11 separate systems for this, and 11 sets of curricula as there are 11 *Länder*, but within a basic framework of courses agreed between the *Länder* at KMK. These routes are taken because they may lead to higher education, or may lead to an employer offering a shorter apprenticeship, or, at the very worst — an employer may view such a candidate preferentially for an apprenticeship. Most courses giving entry to Higher Education last two or three years, but one-year courses also exist. Such courses have about 400,000 students, compared to 1,800,000 apprentices. Curricula are to a large extent *Länd* based; examinations are usually college based with standardisation via detailed regulations and the Inspectorate. All costs are based on normal *Länd* budget processes; bursaries are available for all full time study beyond compulsory leaving age. These bursaries are fairly stringently means-tested on parental income.

It would be wrong to give the impression that the apprenticeship system is almost exclusively for those leaving school at the minimum age. The system is so highly regarded that, as described above, some young people try to enter it via full time vocational education, and some young people enter after a full course of traditional grammar school type education (*gymnasium*). Some organisations, such as banks, find that they can recruit their apprentices largely from young people fully qualified to proceed to university but preferring an apprenticeship. Competition is such that those leaving school at the minimum age may not secure an apprenticeship.

FURTHER VOCATIONAL TRAINING, ADULT TRAINING AND FUNDING

The further vocational training system, in contrast to the apprenticeship Dual System, is far from being a model of co-operation between social partners. In curriculum design and examination terms they are largely rival systems with minimal or no co-operation between employers and state authorities. What unites them is the availability of student support systems. Student tuition fees, in contrast to the Dual System or 16-19 full-time education, are significant. Either maintenance grants or loans are available from separate organisations. In the FRG a separate public-law based institute exists to promote the interests of workers in the labour market. The Federal Labour Office (BFA) is an independent tripartite commission with a governing council composed equally of employers, trade unionists and government. It deals with unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, child benefits etc., and also vocational training for the unemployed or those at risk of unemployment or needing promotion or updating. It sets its own budget and raises funds by a pay roll levy on all employers. It expends considerable money on loans and grants for further vocational training. It also funds training for the unemployed in a variety of ways. It generally either feeds them into the normal qualifications or uses short updating for trades transfer programmes.

MODULARISATION

Most apprentices find work in the trades they qualified for or in a closely related trade. The result is little pressure for modularisation. Experiments began more than 12 years ago with developing about 13 (22 if one counts main sub-divisions) routes of 'First Foundation Training Year' (BGJ) to encompass about 250 defined trades. Employers have, by and large, been very impatient with these experiments in which, while co-operation has been acquired from the National Employers' Association, individual employer co-operation has been effectively absent.

The BGJ is available in a co-operative form with employers taking on apprentices and releasing them for day-release education. Both parts of this training should be to the broader regulations. Of all apprentices in their first year less than 0.5 per cent are in a 'co-operative' BGJ (after more than 12 years). This sort of figure leads us to say individual employer co-operation is absent. The full time school-based BGJ does exist and provides places

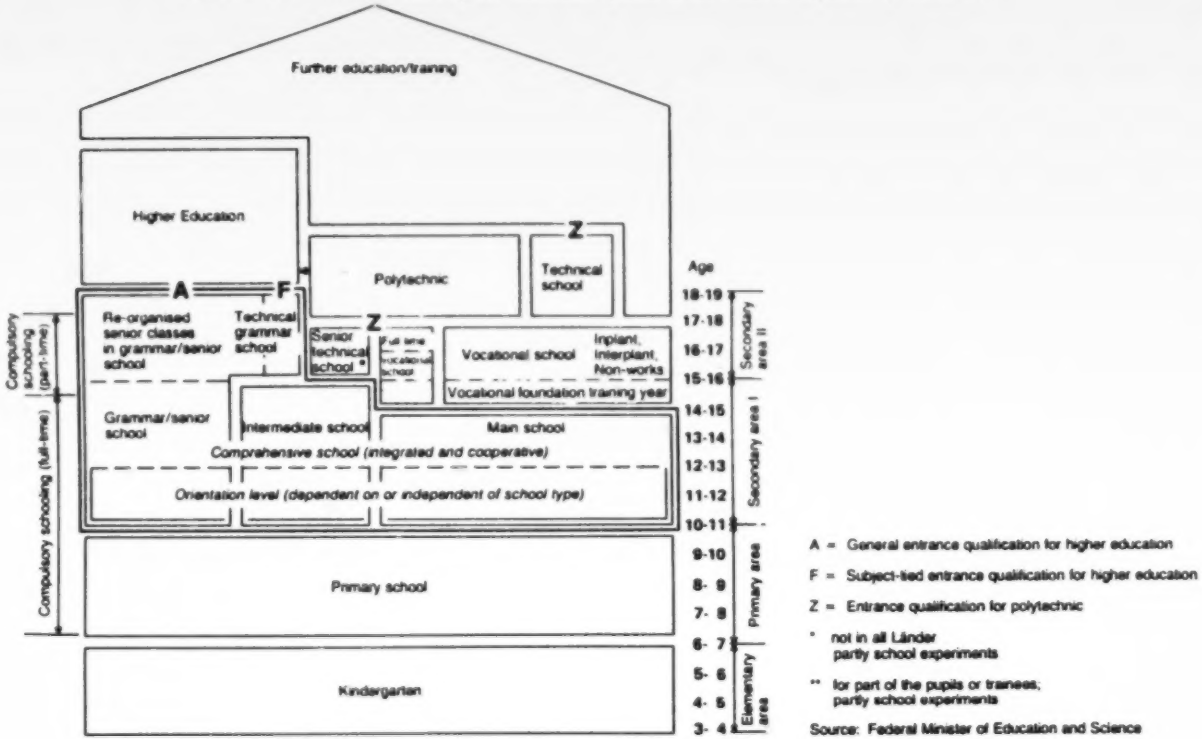
equivalent to about 10 per cent of first-year apprenticeships. These are *Länd* funded. Young people taking this route are still faced with the problem of acquiring an apprenticeship from employers who are not noticeably enthusiastic about this broad-based training.

The only flexibility for modularisation or recognition of previous training in the system is that, once qualified, a worker may take a second qualification in a related field without time-serving again.

Engineering employers have recently agreed to try to reduce the 50+ engineering/metal trades to about six. Success is reported in the progress of this design work. Virtually no recognition of transfer of training exists in the Further Vocational Training System.

The general structure of the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany is shown in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7: General structure of the education system in the Federal Republic of Germany



A = General entrance qualification for higher education

F = Subject-tied entrance qualification for higher education

Z = Entrance qualification for polytechnic

* not in all Länder
partly school experiments

** for part of the pupils or trainees;
partly school experiments

Source: Federal Minister of Education and Science

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ENGLAND AND WALES

Russ Russell

Change is occurring so fast in England and Wales that it is probably best to describe the system and the reasons for its structure as an historically oriented analysis.

ORGANISATIONAL AND LEGAL BASIS

In contrast to all other West European systems the vocational qualification system in England and Wales is almost completely unregulated by public law. Any organisation may legally award educational or training certificates and publicly funded colleges may teach to any syllabus or for any examination. There is no law on apprenticeship or its content. All public agencies operate to erode its traditional time-serving basis and replace it with some sort of test, rather than adding to the time-serving, as other European countries have done, a strict system of testing. No government department is directly involved in curriculum setting, standard setting or examining functions. No distinct government funds are available for such activity in the vocational education system in England and Wales.

What exists for vocational qualifications is a series of examining and certificating bodies, most of which have been established with encouragement, assistance or the actual intervention of the Secretary of State for Education at some point in the past. They include:

— Royal Society of Arts Examination Board (RSA) (1854)

— City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) (1879)

— National Nursery Examinations Board (NNEB) (1945)

— Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) (1972)

— Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) (1983)

There are also other examining bodies including the Regional Bodies, the London Chamber of Commerce and a vast range of professional bodies. Colleges teach to syllabuses from all these and for all these examinations. Employers seem to respect these qualifications in the labour market, although they make criticisms in other contexts.

These central curriculum and examination bodies, unlike those in the school sector, are expected to operate without clear authoritative guidelines from any Ministry. They are to be self-funding and carry out all development work on the basis of examination fee income.

This pattern of no direct state intervention in vocational qualifications was established in the middle of the last century and, while the system has required endless central modification and recommendation, it survives. The independent curriculum bodies were established deliberately to try to regulate what was learned by offering a coherent syllabus and examination. All these independent bodies were encouraged to use governing councils, committees and working parties which represented all interests: employers, professional associations, trade unions, local government, vocational teachers, etc. It has been hoped that the central bodies would thus create syllabuses and certificates that were acceptable to all, particularly to employers, and thus acceptable to students.

There was in England no system of compulsion or any legal structure of training until 1964. Many employers, attracted by the education and training patterns offered in local technical colleges, released trainees (apprentices) to the colleges for training within the (national) syllabuses and examinations from the curriculum bodies. This training was (and is) paid for by local government although fees charged to students and employers make a large contribution to the cost. Many employers did not release students for training and, as a result, trade unions used their power to allow apprentices, who had simply learned 'on-the-job', to gain recognition as skilled workers. The central bodies tended to specialise in what they offered and many levels of qualifications — such as craftsman, advanced craft, technician, higher technician — were developed.

Many students undertook such courses of instruction on a wholly evening basis to improve their own standing in the labour market. Some students undertook studies on a full time basis in the colleges. All of this depended on acceptability in the labour market.

The current bodies have also built up, since their foundation, considerable expertise in consultation, curriculum design and, above all, the setting of reasonable standardisation of award structures. One suspects that these bodies are vastly more professional and efficient at standardisation than anything else in Europe. The English would appear to have an obsession with the belief that a standardised system is central to acceptance in the labour market. The current system is one of the best in Europe from this point of view. The English also appear to have an almost pathological suspicion of teachers and of a locally-based examination system. A standard acceptable model throughout Europe is for teacher assessment with Inspector standardisation. Most teachers and inspectors in England have not developed the necessary expertise and it was dropped as an HMI duty on the formation of TEC and BEC (1973-4). Actually, of course, the certificating bodies use the 25 per cent or so of teachers who wish to do the job by moonlight. This fact is rarely grasped by those who criticise teacher assessment.

The consultation-in-committee technique for developing syllabuses is adequate although, because the system has no legal authority, none of the organisations which send members to the committees feels the necessity for commitment to the training that exists.

THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING BOARDS

By the early 1960s it was becoming clear to central government that the voluntary system was becoming inadequate as a mechanism for providing a skilled workforce for an increasingly competitive world. Major reforms and restructuring took place in England in 1964, a little earlier than in many other European countries. Some 23 Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) were established shortly after the Training Act of 1963, each covering a defined sector (or branch) of an industry such as engineering, printing, construction. Each board had the statutory power to make a levy (or tax) on employers and to make grants to employers for training carried out. The result was a fairly large increase in training and a shift towards block or day release from industry to the technical colleges. Each board had a tripartite

governing council consisting of representatives of employers, employees and government (including local government and teachers).

Training changed and improved. The ITBs developed new standards, new recommendations, training handbooks and other material. Their secretariat grew, monitoring the quality of training in industry. Central examining bodies welcomed their representatives onto their advisory committees. The boards almost universally made day release to the colleges a requirement for firms to obtain the training grant. There was developing a sort of dual qualification system of recognition by a central examining body and recognition by the ITB. At the peak of their influence about 33 per cent of young men and 10 per cent of young women employed were receiving day release and systematic training, although no clear figures exist to distinguish those sponsored by employers to obtain training grant and those for whom no grant was available. The system remained voluntary. All had to pay the levy if required, but training in order to obtain the grant remained voluntary. At no time did much more than 50 per cent of the labour force come within the 'scope' of the ITBs. Central and local government, banking and insurance — a wide range of services — all remained outside the system (although comparable structures arose in some nationalised industries). Nevertheless, ten years after establishment it could have appeared to an outside observer that the system was successful.

The system was not without its critics. Many said that the bureaucracies were too expensive; that the smaller boards achieved little; that the larger boards, often dealing with companies with long traditions of training, did not really improve the quality of training, but only shifted its cost; that cross-sector needs were ignored; and that new technologies were not quickly incorporated. In addition, although some employers accepted the training costs, or their distribution to the whole industry, they resented what they saw as the extra administrative costs of the boards themselves.

THE MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION

A new Industrial Training Act in 1973 established a new, more powerful central body: The Manpower Services Commission (MSC). Various government activities (and their personnel) in training (particularly for the unemployed), in employment agency work and in basic labour market and training intelligence were gathered together and put under the direction of a quasi-autonomous tripartite commission — The Manpower Services

Commission. The Commission, while given authority and responsibility to direct and advise on the service, had no independent budget — all its funds came from a single Ministry (the Department of Employment). The authority of the Commission is thus limited to what it can persuade government to fund. It also has to undertake work directed to it.

The Commission was given oversight of the ITBs and required to co-ordinate their activities where sensible. It also took over certain base funding of their secretariats, thus removing the costs from the direct levy on employers. In fact the MSC achieved little in its relations with the ITBs. The MSC was diverted, in a sense, by an ever-deepening industrial crisis. From 1977 onwards the provision of training opportunities from an ever increasing pool of unemployed and poorly skilled workers became the activity most in the public eye and its prime concern. As the recession deepened, youth training came to dominate. Despite the grant-levy abilities of the ITBs the provision of training in companies was at heart voluntaristic. As the recession deepened employers increasingly refused either to employ young people or to train them. By 1983 training by firms, voluntarily or ITB funded, had declined from about 25 per cent of the age cohort to little more than 10 per cent. This took place at a time when, as in the rest of Europe, the size of the age cohort grew.

By 1983, at the request of Government, the MSC was overseeing the reduction, by closure, of the number of ITBs to seven; leaving none the less, more than half the training places intact. This reduction had an impact on training available.

In 1983 the MSC was funded by government to provide a one-year full time training programme for all unemployed young people who wanted it, expecting that about 40 per cent of the age cohort would request such training. This is known as the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). In practice, slightly fewer than predicted took part. The training was to be designed wherever possible by employers who would act as managing agents for the MSC and provide the training directly or indirectly. It was to be as generic or broad-based as reasonable, within broad criteria and guidelines laid down. No certificate was provided by MSC or, as a requirement, by the employers. Training was to be both on-and off-the-job. A training allowance, much smaller than usual wages, was made to trainees. It has been further agreed that, as from April 1986, the scheme will provide for a two-year training. In the new scheme certification will be a requirement and it is anticipated that there will be a shift back towards training that is more orientated towards traditional skill definitions.

The YTS is funded by central government, although many employers claim that the training could not be wholly undertaken on these funds alone. The remaining ITBs have begun to incorporate YTS funds and opportunities into their programmes.

FULL TIME COLLEGE-BASED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Throughout the period 1945-1983 there was a steady growth of full time vocational education based in the technical colleges or colleges of further education. The Education Act of 1944 confers on the local education authorities the right to offer to people, over compulsory school age, any education from which 'they might profit', whether full time or part time. Local authorities are limited in their autonomy primarily by a lack of money. Until 1979 they relied on their ability to levy local rates (or taxes) and on grants of cash from central government. Since 1980 they have been given reduced grant and also been effectively prevented by central government from raising local taxes by much.

Full time vocational courses in colleges grew steadily from 1945 onwards. The reasons for this were primarily parental pressure and a general desire of young people to delay a formal entry to work while obtaining a better qualification-base to enter the labour market. The courses grew primarily in the vocational fields where industry was reluctant to train or where no industrial training boards existed. Secretarial studies, business studies, hotel and catering, social work and hairdressing were among the larger growth areas. There were a number of reasons why these courses were successful. Firstly, they generally fitted into and used the qualifications, built up by the examining bodies and validating bodies, even though these systems sometimes implied learning at work. Secondly, in many, but not all, areas the colleges were quite 'practical' in their approach. Unlike many vocational schools, colleges or establishments in the rest of Europe, English colleges of FE usually have good workshops. For example, facilities in catering are usually very good; most colleges have a training restaurant trading with and open to the public. This is rare elsewhere. Finally, of course, from the employer's point of view, it is a cheap system. Fees, to students or parents, were often non-existent if the course was regarded as an equivalent (in age terms) of general education in schools.

The English have also developed a series of Technician Qualifications which can be taken at 16-19 and Higher Technician Qualifications which

can be taken at 19-22, the latter as a sort of vocational higher education. These qualifications, like all the others, may be taken on a part time employment-based basis or full time in a college. This type of qualification has proved popular, not only in areas such as business and catering where there is little employer-based training, but also in areas where there is, such as in engineering, construction, technology and computing.

By 1982 the numbers of students on full time courses exceeded the numbers being released by employers and since, on average, the courses were shorter, this represented a larger percentage of any age cohort receiving training in this fashion. In some industrial areas (secretarial, catering, hairdressing) full time college training represented the bulk of those who received any form of systematic training.

THE NEW PATTERN OF 16-19 EDUCATION

The emerging pattern of training is not clear. Because of changes in the system of reporting statistics, the numbers being released by employers on YTS and non-YTS training are hard to distinguish. It seems reasonable to assume that the numbers on non-YTS training will continue to decline. The numbers on full time voluntary training have ceased to expand and will almost certainly decline in the face of competition from the two-year YTS with its offer of training allowances. As far as the long term is concerned, England will probably spend more state money on training than most other European countries, but achieve a lower percentage of the 16-19 age cohort in training. It seems likely that what will emerge is about 25 per cent on full time general education, 15 per cent on full time vocational education, about 40 per cent on YTS and 5-9 per cent in other training systems.

ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The system of grading qualifications in England allows for entry to formal qualifications at any age. Thus technician qualifications, for example, can be undertaken, from the point of view of the examining bodies, in terms of sufficient educational qualifications for entry rather than age or experience. In this way the routes and progression are fairly open. Unfortunately, in terms of recognition of prior learning or the transfer of credit, the system is fairly closed, as it is in terms of partial certification of attainment. This blockage is biggest across the craft/technician divide. Formal adult training

and retraining thus fits easily into the structure of vocational qualifications.

Much more adult training of those in employment, not leading to formal qualifications, takes place. No accurate survey exists of the extent of this but it seems that nearly all is employer funded. As far as study for formal vocational qualifications is concerned, many more are studying for such qualifications on a voluntary training basis than are released by their employers.

One other aspect of the emerging pattern remains unclear: what will be the place of the ITBs? Those that remain have been primarily influential in designing training and in the number of young people being trained. Now that the two-year YTS will be the prime mover in this field, both for funding and to a lesser extent for design (in that more design responsibility rests with the employer than in the ITB system), the ITBs are left with a rump of design activity, the sponsoring of three-year training and adult training and updating. They may not survive.

A NEW QUALIFICATION SYSTEM

Arising from a general dissatisfaction, even irritation, with the lack of co-ordination in the system of vocational qualifications, a working group was established by the Department of Education and Science and the Manpower Services Commission recommended on the structure of all vocational examining. That review body recorded in May 1986 and the Government has since established a new National Council of Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) which first met in October 1986. At the time of writing it seems certain that the NCVQ will operate by:

1 Granting approval to examining bodies or other organisations so that they might give to individuals a national qualification with a specific title;

2 That all such qualifications will be on a modular basis to allow for the maximum transfer of credit between qualifications;

3 That all such qualifications will recognise skill and relevant knowledge as well as the application of these to real work.

These procedures are demanding and if applied within five or six years, as is the intent, will transform what now exists. The current system is fairly inadequate on 2 and 3 above.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

Russ Russell

The original purpose of these papers was clear: to provide a background briefing for a working group that was asked to make recommendations about the vocational qualifications system in England and Wales. Perhaps something similar will stand as a purpose of this report: to allow anyone from any of the countries described to compare systems with a purpose of reviewing the possibilities of change. A wholesale transfer of a vocational qualifications system (or anything else) can never be made from one culture to another, but a piecemeal development of improvement depends, in part, on conceptualising a range of options used in other advanced industrial societies.

One belief shared by most countries reported on here is that a sound system of vocational training and qualification is one of the bases of industrial competitiveness and prosperity. Only in England do some people seem unconvinced of this and it is difficult to challenge effectively the complacency of many employers. No such difficulty exists in Japan where concern with both general and vocational education is almost a national obsession. Japan probably devotes a higher percentage of its wealth to the creation of an efficient labour force than any other industrial country. The USA is similar but has a much more dispersed system of control and it is therefore difficult to be precise about its system. In as much as it is useful, I will also make comparisons with those two major industrial nations.

PLANNING FOR QUALITY

Of the five nations examined here, Sweden, which has the highest

percentage of the 16-19 age group in formal education, has the most sophisticated system of keeping the numbers moving through the available routes in close proportion to perceived demand. Only Japan has a more complex system of control through a national plan formulated, under the Department of Labour, in a tripartite of structure, commission and committees. The Federal Republic of Germany, with its strong emphasis on apprenticeship, relies heavily on employers. This system is not without its faults — criticism is widespread that some trades (such as garage mechanic, hairdresser, baker) vastly over-recruit and train; using trainees as cheap labour which is then laid off. France and the Netherlands, using mixtures of full and part time routes, rely on the generic character of the training to absorb the trained. The USA, with a complex system of local control, private institutions and initiatives, relies on the market. Sweden, of course, also relies on the generic character of training within 'the lines'.

PLANNING THE ROUTES

All the five countries reported on have experienced the European tradition of trade-specific apprenticeships. No country is without experience of trade-specific routes. Anxieties about the use of these as a base for training are strongly expressed in all countries. Few now believe that specific training is a suitable basis for a rapidly changing economy. Japan and the USA go further and, in effect, ensure that a high percentage of the young take general education to 18. On the other hand, with the exception of Sweden, the mainland European countries reported on appear to be reluctant to abandon apprenticeship with its traditions and the sense of pride and skill ownership which is often associated with it. In full time college-based systems, however, most countries seem to believe that 20 to 25 broad generic training routes meet the needs of industry. England stands alone in having no clear structures to decrease the numbers or types of routes. In the Youth Training Scheme the number of routes could become almost infinite with everything relying on a philosophy of transferable and generic skills.

COLLEGE-BASED TRAINING

Social and parental pressures seem to be a prime reason for extending the availability of full time vocational education. The powerful prestigious images of the academic routes are often unconsciously behind the desire for routes that, while vocational, do not close the door on or may lead back to

general education or on to full time higher education. This is most powerful in Sweden but exists everywhere. The extent of its success is perhaps more a mirror of the failure or success of the part time route in either opportunity or prestige. In England, between 1979 and 1983, this full time route expanded by 50 per cent — a clear response to the lack of part time opportunities.

PART TIME EMPLOYER-BASED TRAINING

Only the Federal Republic of Germany has retained and improved on a very high level of confidence in apprenticeship on the part of employers and parents. The key may lie in part in the relatively low wages paid, but more importantly in the way in which, at local level, the employers, through the Chambers of Commerce, feel in control. Some revival is taking place in the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent France, but at a financial cost to the state. In Sweden and England it has been more or less abandoned, as it is in the USA. In Japan, on-the-job training after general education is seen as important and continuous. Japanese training is often more specific — not 'routed' — but rooted in the job in a context in which all supervisors see themselves as trainers.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Training in Japan is seen as a continuous responsibility of both employer and employee in the interests of production. In the USA individuals have the responsibility to maintain and improve their earning power. In the Federal Republic the system shows something of both these characteristics and, since access to the formal system of qualifications is open only to those with basic qualifications, it reinforces the basic system. In-plant continuous training is a responsibility of the firm in Germany and continued formal education is the responsibility of the individual (supported by the state). In both cases training is part of a culture of mastery of the task in hand. In France, the state sees itself as responsible to support the system of continuous training in national as well as employer and employee interests, and theirs is a well legislated system of continuous educational leave. Nevertheless, the system of opportunities in France, like those in Sweden, the Netherlands and England, is fairly haphazard in its structure and distribution.

EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES

All five of the European countries reported here have introduced emergency programmes to deal with youth unemployment. In the mainland European systems the measures are designed only to ease entry from unemployment into the normal training routes. The unemployed are seen as being unfortunate in a competitive world; their misfortunes are seen to stem from one or more basic deficiencies in their education or character. If these can be made good, re-entry will be possible.

In Britain alone have the emergency measures for youth unemployment had any impact on normal routes. In Britain these measures are driving out what remains of part time employer-sponsored training and is becoming the 'normal' system. In design terms it is so chaotic that standardisation must surely take place soon, but little is fixed by systems perceived as unsuccessful. What matters is the relationship to full time school or college-based training.

TRANSFERABILITY OF SKILLS

One reason commonly held for high unemployment is that unemployed workers lack the ability to transfer their skills to a new situation, can not see them as generic skills which can be widely used. Whatever the truth of this, all five countries have adopted some measures to provide broader based and more modular training. The general trend is for broad-based and generic training, with the possibility of adding on small parts (modules). Sweden has emphasised the broad base. The system in the Federal Republic of Germany pays least attention to this, except in a largely theoretical way in the Vocational Training Foundation Year Scheme (largely rejected by employers). England has adopted these themes most enthusiastically. It could be said that the only dominant idea in the increasingly influential Youth Training Scheme is the philosophy of transferable generic skills. The Manpower Services Commission has invested large sums of money in developments which group jobs into 'occupational training families' and larger sums into the development of 'core skills' in the workplace (much of this money comes from EEC funds). Modularisation is to be developed and expanded in full time training in England. In this context France and the Netherlands present systems which look neither particularly 'traditional' nor 'modern'.

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

It cannot be a coincidence that the two countries subject to aggressive undemocratic, military dictatorships about 50 years ago now seem the most obsessed with formal, legalistically-based structures for dispersing power, for committees and consensus and for the incorporation of employers' and employees' organisations into state decision-taking. In Japan, at a national level at any rate, and in the Federal Republic of Germany, at all levels and for all tasks, tri-partite corporate decision-taking bodies exist.

With varying degrees of formal and legislated bases the Netherlands, Sweden and France carefully consult, although in their cases decisions are formally represented as those of the state. Only in England and the USA can decisions be made more independently. In England incorporation takes place in a more pluralistic way, mainly at the level of implementation. For example, it cannot be pretended by anyone that employers' withdrawal from part time training was anything other than their decision. Nor is it pretended that the YTS is other than a government decision, but the administration of YTS, its content and standards, are to structures that are seen as tripartite and a corporate response through the MSC on the part of employers' organisations, the trade unions and local government.

The details of social-partner involvement are so varied as not to be capable of any easy description or comparison short of the fuller statements made earlier.

DECISIONS ON CONTENT AND STANDARDS

Although decisions on content and standards are not the same issue they can be seen within a similar framework. Four systems seem broadly possible.

1 A system in which practitioners, such as professional bodies or trade unions, decide what is acceptable.

2 Employers generally influence what is decided through their associations or by direct action.

3 The state, acting on behalf of society, seeks compromise with some minimal protection of each of the interest groups concerned (employers, employees, consumers).

4 Decisions shift towards teachers and trainers acting in a direct way.

It is very difficult to make single statements about each country concerned. In England it is clear that the third option is low compared to the other European countries reported on. In England content is generally defined in the examining bodies by an interaction of employers, practitioners and teachers in that order of contribution and influence. Standards are largely a matter for teachers, though disguised by the national examining bodies. The YTS shifts power dramatically to the employers and the state — a major change.

The Federal Republic of Germany, on the other hand, seems to have the content formally defined by the state, but one suspects that teachers and practitioners are as voluble in the service of the Federal Institute of Vocational Training as they are elsewhere, thus gaining influence. In testing and standard setting, though, employers and practitioners, through the Chambers, predominate. Sweden and France have state systems strongly influenced by teachers and trainers (who are often nominated by employers), while the Netherlands is very varied in its structure.

Comparative work is always difficult. Employers the world over believe that trade unions have too much power and the reverse is also true. The outside observer must seek to determine the relative veracity of such beliefs, not their absolute veracity.

We hope this report will help many to see their own situation more clearly, for each country faces its own traditions and history and the people in it must determine the direction and extent of change. Looking at other countries' systems is sometimes a help in these decisions.